

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Today, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1262, The Water Quality Investment Act, with bipartisan support: 317-100. Congressman Rob Wittman, an environmental scientist by trade, offered an amendment to require the OMB Director to report to Congress on an interagency budget for Chesapeake Bay restoration activities. This amendment would also require the EPA to develop a Chesapeake Bay restoration management plan. The amendment was agreed to by the House by unanimous consent. Wittman introduced the amendment in an effort to fundamentally alter the management of Chesapeake Bay restoration activities. To date, the complexity of the multiple complex efforts among, federal, state, and local governments has resulted in a muddled effort.

"I am so pleased that the Rules Committee and the House as a whole have taken the opportunity to adopt this amendment as a portion of the Water Quality Investment Act," said Wittman.

"This amendment offers much needed oversight and transparency, in an effort to restore and maintain the Bay. Now we will have everyone who has worked so hard towards the Bay's restoration on the same page," said Wittman.

Wittman had previously introduced similar legislation (H.R. 1053) which would fully implement two cutting edge management techniques, crosscut budgeting and adaptive management, to enhance coordination, flexibility and efficiency of restoration efforts. Neither technique is currently required or fully utilized in the Bay restoration efforts, where results have lagged far behind the billions of dollars spent. Both methods required by the bill have been used successfully in complex restoration efforts in the Everglades, the Great Lakes and the California Bay Delta.

"The Chesapeake bay restoration is at a tipping point and without a renewed commitment that increases the cleanup effort by a great deal, we will not see any level of improved water quality in our future," added Wittman.

In drafting this legislation, Congressman Wittman drew heavily on his 16 years of experience as a shellfish specialist monitoring water quality and environmental health issues in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.